

# **NEWS Utah Labor Commission**

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Utah Labor Commission establishes Office of Coal Mine Safety**

SALT LAKE CITY, May 8, 2008 – The Coal Mine Safety Act, which became effective May 5th, establishes the Office of Coal Mine Safety and the search for a director to oversee the office is currently underway. The Director will work with coal miner certification officials and will be integral as a partner with all entities of the coal mine industry. Initially the office will be housed in Price, but will eventually be located at Western Energy Training Center in Helper, Utah. Funding for the office begins July 1, 2008.

The tragic events of the August 6, 2007, early morning cave in at the Crandall Canyon Mine forever altered the way of life for coal miners and their families for generations to come. The tragedy triggered events which resulted in the eventual establishment of the Office of Coal Mine Safety.

Governor Jon M. Huntsman immediately created an Executive Order for the creation of the Utah Mine Safety Commission beginning August 27, 2007. The Commission, chaired by Scott Matheson, Jr. was represented with professionals within the coal mine industry whose responsibility it was to make recommendations to the Governor regarding the future safety of all involved in Utah's coal mine industry.

"The Utah Labor Commission played a crucial role in the process by retrieving all available Utah history pertaining to mine safety and Utah's present role in coal mine safety", said Labor Commissioner Sherrie Hayashi. Hayashi was also asked to serve as the state representative on the Mine Safety Commission. "With the 2000 legislative session quickly approaching, timing was critical. The Mine Safety Commission needed to determine if the current level of state participation was sufficient, or if the state needed to be more involved and then arrange for necessary legislation to be drafted."

In January, 2008, their fact finding and review resulted in a recommendation by the Utah Mine Safety Commission to establish the Coal Mine Safety Office under the direction of the Utah Labor Commission. In addition, the Labor Commission is creating a Mine Safety Technical Advisory Council and is in the process of appointing members. The Council should be complete in July, 2008.

Effective immediately, to report a mine safety condition that could cause a serious accident, injury, illness or fatality call Utah's Office of Coal Mine Safety toll-free number: **1-888-9UT-MINE (988-6463)**. The Office exists to maximize coal mine safety, prevent coal mine accidents, and provide for effective coal mine accident response.

Individuals interested in applying for the position Director of Office of Coal Mine Safety should visit <https://statejobs.utah.gov>. If you have questions regarding this position please call Sharon Reynolds at (801) 530-6018.

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